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Annual Report for 1939

W.S.Walton, M.D.,B.S.,D.P.H.,B.Hy.

Medical Officer of Health.

W.W.Foakes, M.R.San.I.,M.S.I.A.,
A.M.Inst.P.C.

Chief Sanitary Inspector.



TO HIS WORSHIP THE MAYOR, ALDERMEN AND COUNCILLORS OF
THE COUNTY BOROUGH OF WEST BROMWICH.

Your Worship, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I have the honour to submit to you my Annual Report, the contents of which have been much curtailed, in accordance with Circular 2067 (England), issued by the Ministry of Health.

In view of the increasing pressure of work in the Health Departments of Local Authorities, and the need for strict economy in the use of paper, the Minister considered that interim reports only should be made. Arrangements have been made to preserve all records, including statistics, in order that a comprehensive report giving separate annual records may be presented after the termination of the war.

POPULATION

In war-time the Registrar General separates the Civil and Services populations. The estimated population in the usually accepted interpretation of that expression has not been supplied to Local Authorities, but separate figures on which to calculate Birth and Death Rates have been provided. The figures for West Bromwich are as follows -

For Death Rate		For Birth Rate
83,150		82,360
<u>Birth Rate</u>	<u>1938</u>	<u>1939</u>
	18.90	18.05
<u>Death Rate</u>		
	12.14	11.58
<u>Infantile</u>		
<u>Death Rate</u>	57.58	58.19

The death rate was lower than in any of the previous four years and the birth rate of 18.05 shows a slight decline. Deaths among infants under one year of age remained fairly constant, and showed only a slight increase over the smallest total ever recorded (1938).

It is of interest to note that the proportion of deaths occurring at ages in excess of 65 years is still increasing, the percentage for 1939 having reached 42.2 compared with 40.4 for 1938. The number of deaths from violence including those resulting from road accidents was alarming, and excluding suicides totalled 55 against 28 during 1938.

INFECTIOUS AND RESPIRATORY DISEASES.

(a) Infectious Diseases

<u>Incidence of Disease</u>		<u>Notifications</u>	
		1938	1939
			(9 months)
Scarlet Fever		161	119
Diphtheria		228	139
Pneumonia		139	84
Meningitis (Meningococcal)		4	6
Erysipelas		50	43
Measles		15	262
Whooping Cough		46	63
Totals.		643	736

Under 5 years to 22nd. Oct., 1939; all ages subsequently.

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Deaths from Infectious Disease (R.G. figures)

	<u>1938</u>	<u>1939</u>
Measles	1	13
Scarlet Fever	1	"
Whooping Cough	4	6
Diphtheria	18	13
Encephalitis Lethargica	1	1
Tuberculosis - Pulmonary	53	56
" - Non-Pulmonary	10	11
Totals	<u>88</u>	<u>100</u>

(b) Deaths from Respiratory Diseases (R.G. figures)

	<u>1938</u>	<u>1939</u>
Bronchitis	43	52
Pneumonia	108	74
Other Respiratory Diseases	14	12
Totals	<u>165</u>	<u>138</u>

GENERAL HEALTH

The general health of the town was reasonably satisfactory, and infectious disease prevalence generally was not so marked as in previous years. The war period of four months had no great bearing on the health of the people. During that time there was no crowding or prolonged occupancy of small shelters and there was no rationing of food. The degree of evacuation was so small as to have practically no effect on vital statistics but there was no doubt that those children who were evacuated benefited substantially.

Whilst a general survey of these figures gives re-assurance and incidentally a striking tribute to the Nation's and local health policy over a number of years, we must remember that war-time severely taxes individual and general health. The outlook for the immediate future must be rather uncertain, but this much can be said, that the health of the town has not deteriorated even up to the present date (December, 1940). The future for maintenance of good health depends among other things upon (a) correct feeding, and we have every reason to believe essential food supplies will be adequate; (b) taking of regular exercise and rest; (c) prevention of spread of infection, which is more liable under war-time conditions, and which is a matter for the attention of both the individual and the Local Authority; (d) if shelters have to be used, a sound National and local health policy.

In the original planning of shelters, it was not foreseen that shelters would be used for prolonged periods and sleeping accommodation was not contemplated. Lord Horder's Committee published its recommendations in late 1940. Light, warmth and adequate ventilation are the prime requisites and the sooner they are dealt with, the less will be the risk to health from lowered resistance and infection.

MATERNITY AND CHILD WELFARE

The attendance at Welfare Clinics showed some diminution in the latter part of the year, and was associated with black-out and other war conditions. The ante-natal clinics, on the other hand, proved more popular than ever.

Despite difficulties of obtaining material, your two building projects (a) the new Maternity Wards at Hallam Hospital, and (b) the new combined welfare centre at Stone Cross were commenced during the year, and officially opened in 1940. The health services will benefit considerably by this acquisitions. There still remains a serious gap in the welfare services which can be bridged only by provision of modern and healthy premises for the Centre at Hamstead. No immediate solution is envisaged at the moment, but there is no doubt that the premises occupied at the moment are unsuitable and unhygienic, and not compatible with the needs of a growing area.

There is now only one Maternity Home in the Borough: this Home was visited periodically and inspected.

Home visits paid by Health Visitors to expectant mothers were 518 as compared with 419 in 1938.

Dental treatment for expectant mothers was continued; 148 mothers were referred to the Dentist, of whom 97 were treated: dentures were supplied in 30 cases.

One hundred-and seventy-eight infants were dentally treated.

Maternal Deaths

Sepsis	2	
Others	<u>2</u>	
Total	<u>4</u>	Death rate 2.67

Midwifery Service

The average number of midwives in the service of the Authority was eleven; the number of confinements attended was 980, 879 as midwives and 101 as maternity nurses.

Four midwives resigned their posts during the year, one for health reasons surrendered her certificate, one relinquished her profession on marriage, one returned to private practice and the other obtained an appointment elsewhere.

TUBERCULOSIS

<u>New Cases</u>	Males	Females	TOTAL
Pulmonary	59	28	87
Non-Pulmonary	12	9	21
	<u>71</u>	<u>37</u>	<u>108</u>
1938			
Pulmonary	58	30	88
Non-Pulmonary	8	10	18
	<u>66</u>	<u>40</u>	<u>106</u>

Notification and Registration

Notifications received during the year were Pulmonary 75 Non-Pulmonary 11. The number on the notification register at 31.12.39. was 392 and the Dispensary Register 259.

Examinations

New cases examined numbered 143, and the total attendances at the Dispensary was 2,249. Radiological examination was carried out in the case of 181 patients.

Home Conditions and After-Care

Domiciliary visits paid by the Health Visitors amounted to, 1,679.

The Voluntary Care Committee continues to assist necessitous patients: the year's expenditure exceeded £80.

Sanatoria

Fifty-seven patients were sent to Sanatoria. The average duration of stay was 128 days.

MENTAL DEFICIENCY ACTS

The particulars of mental defectives in the Borough on the 31st. December, 1939 are as follows:-

A. Defectives ascertained as 'subject to be dealt with' by the Local Authority.

	M.	F.	Total
1. Under 'order'			
(a) In Institutions (excluding those in State institutions) :			
Under 16 years	9	76	15
16 years and over	55	76	131
(b) On licence from Institution			
Under 16 years	-	-	-
16 years and over	4	17	21
On licence from Guardianship			
Under 16 years	-	-	-
16 years and over	-	1	1
2. Under Statutory Supervision	23	28	51

B. Mental Defectives not at present 'subject to be dealt with'

Under voluntary supervision

(a) Maintained by parents, relatives or others	4	8	12
In receipt of out-relief	-	-	-
Wholly maintained by Local Authority in Institutions or Voluntary Homes	3	5	8

(b) Reported to Local Authority from reliable source

(1) children between 14 - 16 years	13	4	17
(2) Other cases	47	49	96

158	194	352
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HOSPITAL SERVICES

HALLAM HOSPITAL

The evacuation of patients at the outbreak of war in September was carried out expeditiously, some 80 cases being transferred to Gloucester. The Hospital continued to admit acute cases but as far as possible cases were not retained for long periods, and consequently more beds were free for emergency casualty admission. This policy, dictated by National needs, of necessity reduced the number of patient days and was reflected in the steep rise of ascertained cost per patient over the year.

There was an increase in the work of the Maternity Wards, 547 mothers being delivered, compared with 512 during 1938. The number of West Bromwich cases was 378 and 254 respectively. There were also 5 cases delivered at home following the hospital evacuation.

	<u>Men</u>	<u>Women</u>	<u>Children</u>	<u>TOTAL</u>	<u>Total for 1938</u>
Admissions and Births	1,007	1,650	1,578	4,235	4,345
Discharges and Deaths	1,038	1,700	1,597	4,335	4,431

Cases were admitted from the following Authorities:-

	<u>1939</u>	<u>1938</u>
Worcestershire County Council	832	951
Staffordshire County Council	432	521
Borough of Tipton	99	102
County Borough of Smethwick	165	325
Borough of Rowley Regis	2	-
City of Birmingham	1	2
County Borough of West Bromwich	2,704	2,440
<u>Total</u>	<u>4,235</u>	<u>4,345</u>
Number of Patient days	103,719	124,104

INFECTIOUS DISEASES HOSPITAL

	<u>Scarlet Fever</u>	<u>Diphtheria</u>	<u>Measles</u>	<u>Whooping Cough</u>	<u>Other Cases</u>	<u>TOTAL</u>
West Bromwich	89	146	19	7	15	276
Tipton	12	31	1	-	2	46
Wednesbury	26	16	2	-	3	47
Dudley	11	2	-	-	-	13
Oldbury	-	-	-	-	3	3
Cannock	1	13	-	-	-	14
Rowley Regis	3	2	-	-	-	5
Aldridge	-	2	-	-	-	2
Wigmore Schools (Remand Home)	-	1	-	-	-	1
	142	213	22	7	23	407

AIR RAID PRECAUTIONS

The organisation and training of the Casualty Services of the Borough took up a considerable amount of time in the earlier part of the year, but after the outbreak of war the work grew rapidly in scope. The ambulance services (approximately 320 persons), the First Aid Party service (approximately 180 persons), the First Aid Post service (approximately 320 persons), various smaller services (100) and the Civil Nursing Reserve (240 persons) together with the Voluntary and Municipal Hospital Services under the Ministry's E.M.S. Scheme brought the Health Department many additional responsibilities. Specialist training of all the personnel, issue of stores and equipment, the various actions made necessary by the Government's instructions, and the blending of all these activities into a composite casualty service, was no small task.

The organisation was put to a severe test in late 1940, and carried out all that was demanded from it in a most efficient manner, and considerably justified the sincere confidence which the Authorities had in the Casualty and Hospital services. The brave work performed under actual raiding conditions was magnificent.


SUPERANNUATION MEDICAL EXAMINATIONS

The under-mentioned superannuation medical examination were carried out during the year by the Medical Staff -

Number of examinations	200
Accepted	170
Recommendation deferred	27
Refused	3
Number of re-examinations	7
Accepted	7

I am,

Yours obediently,


MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH

Health Department,
2, Lodge Road,
WEST BROMWICH.

7th December, 1940

ANNUAL REPORT OF THE CHIEF SANITARY INSPECTOR FOR 1939.

To the Chairman and Members of the Health Committee.

I have pleasure in submitting my report of the salient features of the work of the Sanitary Department for the year 1939. The extra work and duties involved in Civil Defence, and War conditions have placed a strain on the Inspectorial Staff and it has not been possible before to submit this Report.

General Sanitary Administration.

During the year, 26,431 inspections of all classes were made a total which, in view of the extra work involved by the outbreak of hostilities was very satisfactory. One thousand two hundred and fifty four notices were served and a total of 2,578 improvements effected.

In addition to the usual routine water sampling, samples of water were obtained from the Artesian Wells in the district and tabulated for further use.

An application for the registration of premises as a Common Lodging House was refused, and the premises have since been demolished.

The usual routine inspections were made of places of Public Entertainment and as the result of pressure from this Department the sanitary accommodation at a Cinema was remodelled.

Housing.

A Ministry of Health Inquiry was held in May into the Council's application for the confirmation of seven Compulsory Purchase Orders and one Clearance Order. Considerable opposition was experienced against the Compulsory Purchase Orders and the Inquiry lasted two days. One of the Compulsory Purchase Orders (Malt Street) was confirmed, the remaining Orders being held over by the Ministry until the end of the War.

The whole of the buildings in seven confirmed Clearance Orders were demolished during the year, bringing the total of Clearance Areas completely cleared to 54. A total of 280 Unfit houses were demolished, making a total of 1,692 houses demolished since the inception of the Slum Clearance Programme. From these Unfit houses a total of 7,626 persons were removed and re-housed in new Corporation Houses.

The work in connection with the eradication of the Bed-Bug was continued during the year, and the furniture from 543 houses was disinfested with H.C.N. Gas before delivery to the New Council Houses.

Meat and other Foods.

The inspection of meat and other foods has again occupied a considerable part of the time of your Inspectorial Staff and has necessitated inspections both before and after the normal working hours.

Nearly seventeen and a half tons of meat and food was condemned as unfit for human consumption and destroyed. A total of 2,581 cattle, 335 calves, 6,000 sheep and 18,139 pigs were inspected after slaughter and the percentage of the carcasses affected with tuberculosis was as under:-

Cattle (excluding cows)	5.5%
Cows	18.4%
Pigs	5.7%

Food and Drugs Act, 1938.

A total of 249 samples of Food and Drugs were submitted for analysis to the Public Analyst during the year, and of this number 127 were Milk.

The adulteration found was the largest for several years and represented 9% of the total number submitted. The most serious adulteration occurred during the last quarter of the year and was found in milk entering the Borough from Country districts. Adulteration by the addition of water varying from 31 - 40% being discovered. Fines amounting to a total of £25. 0. 0., with 11 guineas Costs were inflicted for these Offences.

One sample of flour described as "Egglite" was found to contain no trace of eggs, and after being cautioned the manufacturers withdrew stocks and altered the labels. One sample of Pork Sausage sold as unpreserved contained preservative and the vendor was cautioned.

Public Cleansing.

The total tonnage of house refuse collected was 24, 575 tons, representing 24,144 loads. Of the tonnage, 294 tons was Nightsoil and 1,534 tons was collected from cesspools.

There was a slight increase in the tonnage of Nightsoil collected, due, in the main, to military requirements. The Dry Refuse showed an increase in the number of loads collected by nearly 100 loads, the tonnage being approximately 500 tons below the average for the previous year. These figures illustrate the tendency during recent years of the increase in bulk and decrease in weight of house refuse collected. The refuse was dealt with at the Salvage Works, Black Lake and at the Controlled Tips at Heath Lane and Tanhouse, Great Barr.

Towards the end of the year the Ministry of Supply launched their Salvage Campaign, and although a Salvage Scheme had been in operation for many years, steps were taken to increase the salvage of waste and dormant materials and particularly in relation to waste paper. A total of 522 tons of materials were salvaged during 1939, of which 317 tons was baled destructor scrap. This figure will be greatly exceeded during the present year.

Yours obediently,

W. W. FOAKES, M.R. San. I.,
H.S.I.A., A.H.Inst. P.C.

Chief Sanitary Inspector and
Superintendent Refuse Removal and
Disposal.